
Renate Christ
IPCC
Secretary

Bonn
2 June 2011

# Communicating Climate Change Science

ipcc
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change

WMO UNEP

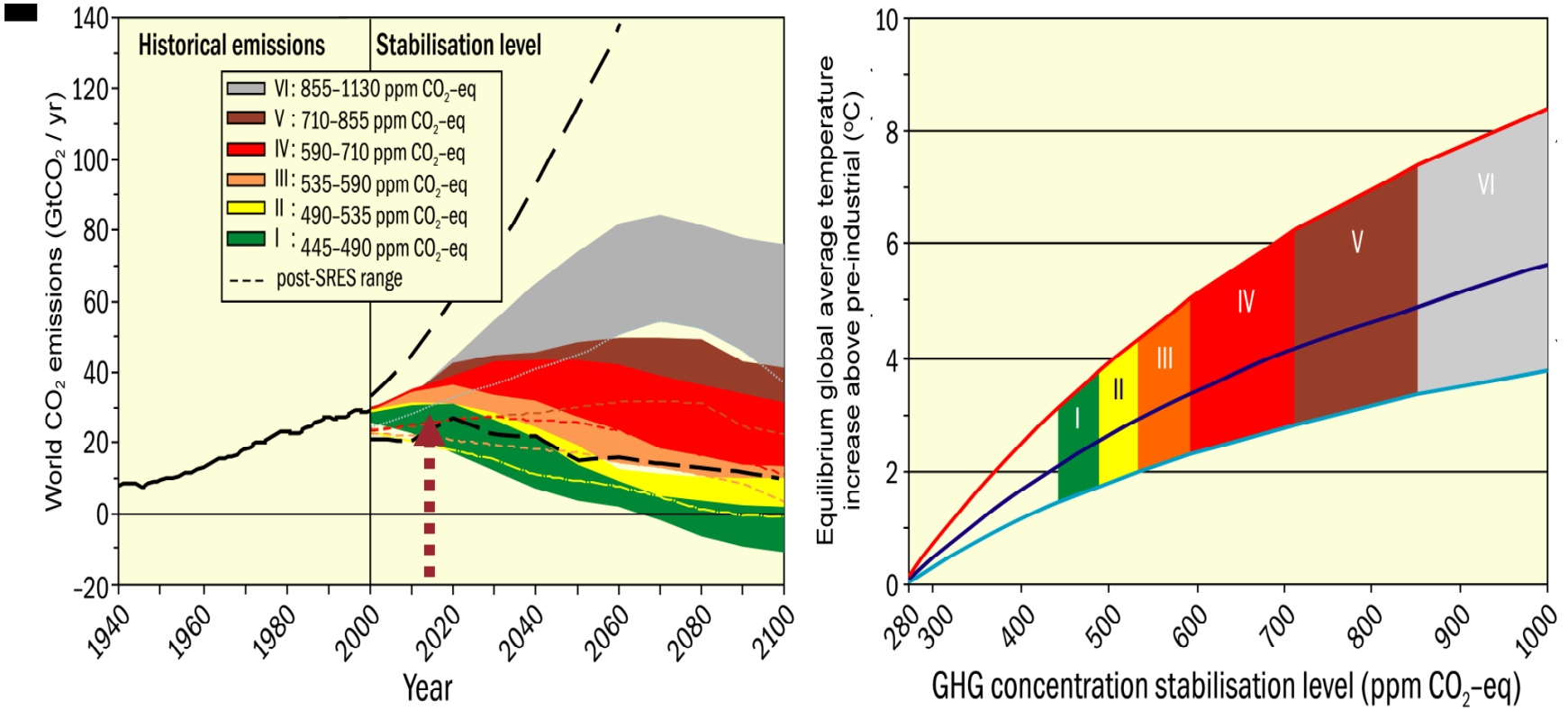
# Communication challenges
# Some examples

- Fuzzy understanding of a ton of $CO_2$ or of carbon – relate to practical examples
- Costs – for whom, put them in context
- How are climate scenarios developed and what do they tell us
- Certain words and concepts used in science convey a different message to public e.g. positive feedback, or likelihood statements

# … and how to address them

- Explain scientific information in easy to understand language
- Use examples to which user can relate, think outside the climate change box
- Use consistent metrics and explain them
- Use simple graphics

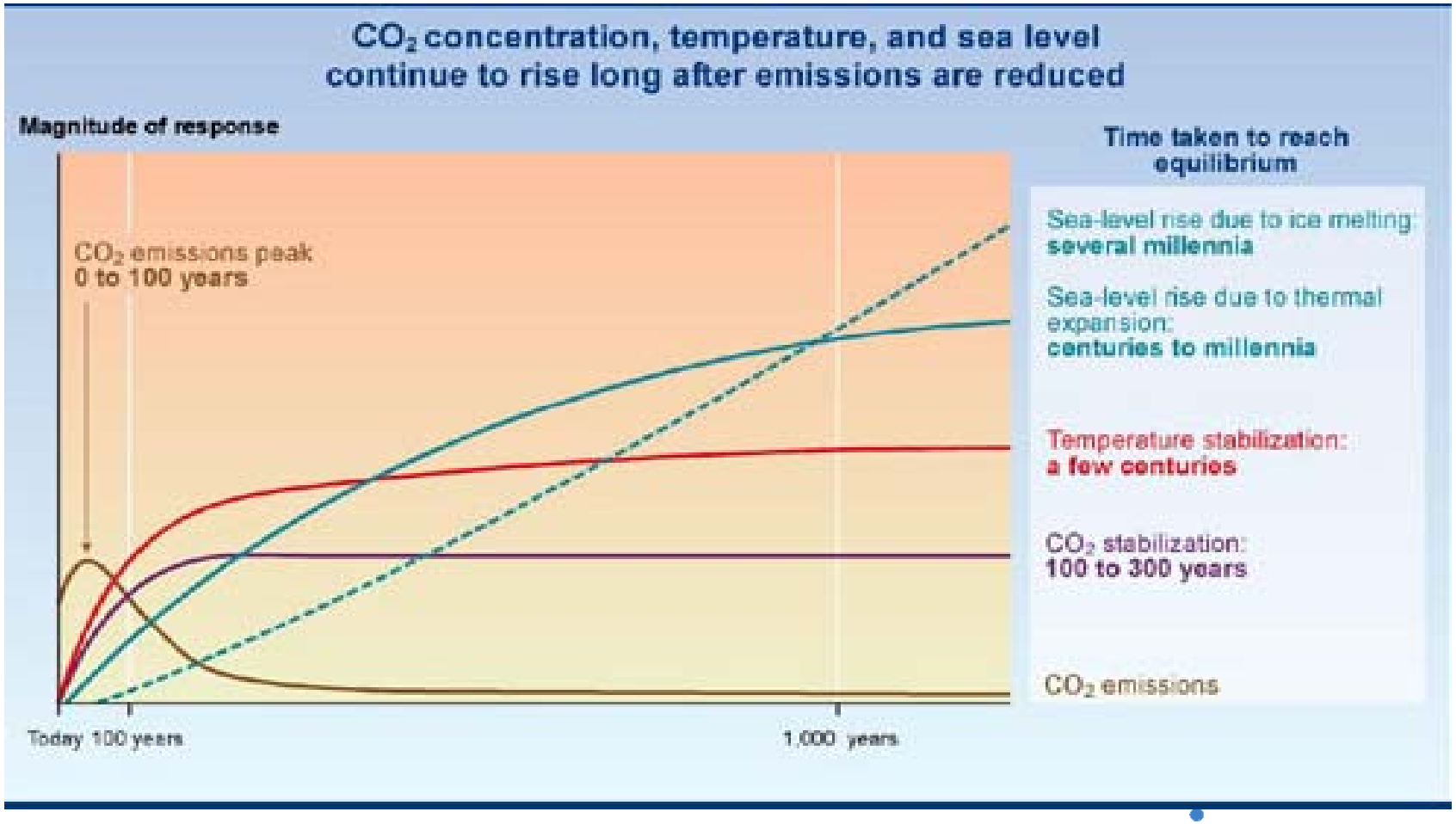
# The lower the stabilisation level the earlier **global emissions** have to peak ...




IPCC, 2007

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change

# Emissions →concentrations → temperature → sea level




IPCC, 2001

# IPCC role in communication

- Prepare c eports on state of k
- Policy rel ve
- Scoping p n needs of users
- Multidisci hors from all region
- Consider ain difference
- Approval governme

# New features of AR5

- Outlines address not individual sectors but systems people can relate to e.g. food production and food security; settlements and infrastructure; urban and rural planning, human health, wellbeing and security
- More attention to regional matters in all WGs, e.g. climate phenomena such as monsoon, atlas
- Cross cutting themes e.g. costing and economic analysis, carbon cycle, earth system changes
- From A-M-SD to integration with other environmental and development issues

➢ Move from climate change box to true integration

# Uncertainties and risks

*Risk is function of probability and consequence*

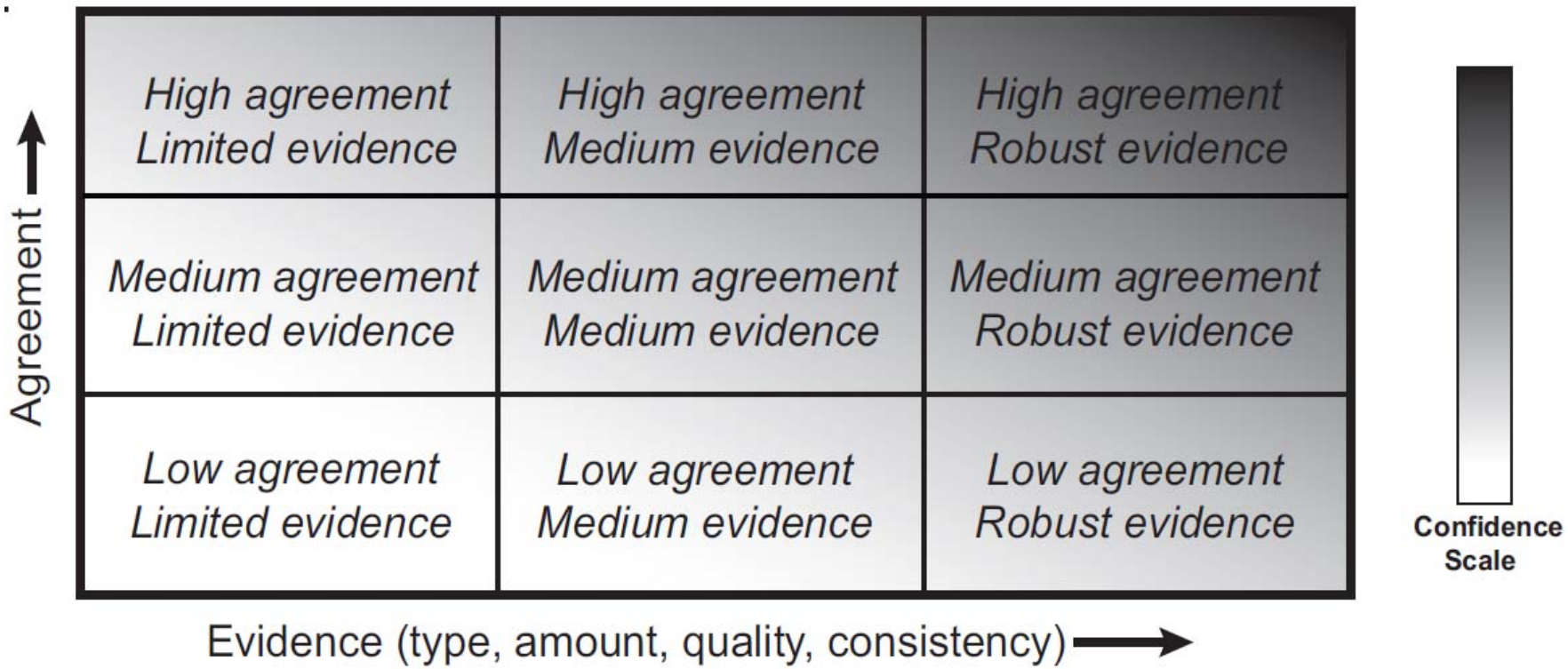
- Full range of consequences / probabilities
- Tails also important – high impact events
- If outcome conditional evaluate all causes and effects, reconcile multiple evidence
- Framing has effect on how message is perceived – reciprocal statements
- If statements too general - meaningless

# Communication of uncertainties IAC recommendations

- Confidence scale should not be used to assign subjective probabilities to ill-defined outcomes
- Traceable account of how authors arrived at ratings for level of scientific understanding and likelihood
- Likelihood scale should be stated in terms of probabilities (numbers) in addition to words to improve understanding of uncertainty

# Confidence in validity of a finding

expressed qualitatively (5 qualifiers) based on type, amount, quality and consistency of evidence, and degree of agreement



# Likelihood
# Quantified measures of uncertainty

Expressed probabilistically based on statistical analysis of observations, model results or expert judgment

| Table 1. Likelihood Scale | |
|---|---|
| **Term*** | **Likelihood of the Outcome** |
| *Virtually certain* | 99-100% probability |
| *Very likely* | 90-100% probability |
| *Likely* | 66-100% probability |
| *About as likely as not* | 33 to 66% probability |
| *Unlikely* | 0-33% probability |
| *Very unlikely* | 0-10% probability |
| *Exceptionally unlikely* | 0-1% probability |

# IPCC communications framework

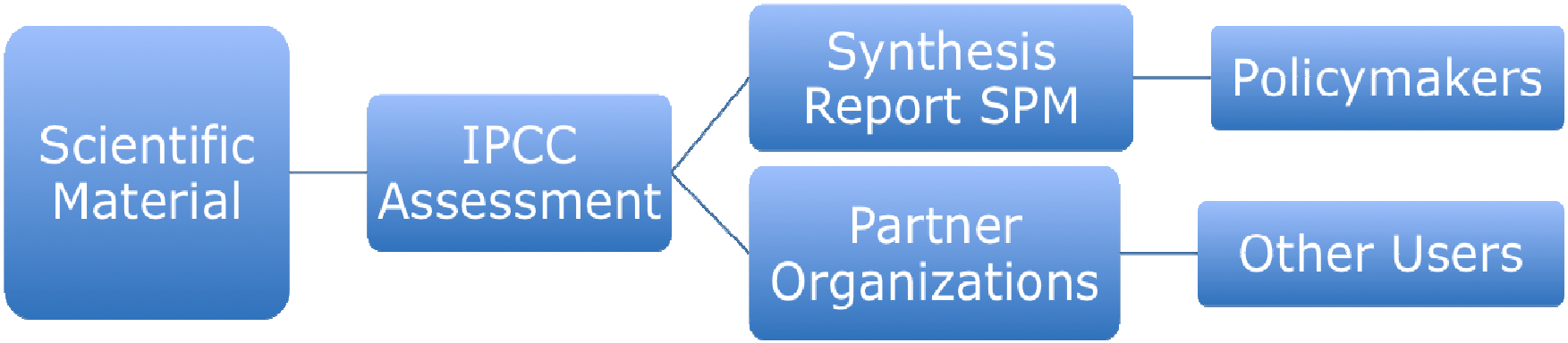
- Objective and transparent
- Policy relevant not policy prescriptive
- Drawn from IPCC reports
- Relevance to stakeholders
- Timely and audience appropriate
- Coordinated and coherent
- Rapid and thoughtful responses

# Interaction with media

- Press releases and conferences
- Briefings at occasion of IPCC meetings
- Regular interaction and monitoring
- Communicate IPCC role
- Timely response to queries
- Clear communication in case of errors
- Strategy to address new social media

# Scope of IPCC communication

- Full range of IPCC expertise
  - Comprehensible without sacrificing accuracy
  - Raise awareness on new conclusions
- Communicate IPCC functions
- Capacity building for and through FPs
- E-tools, searchable, in different languages
- FAQs in addition to SPM and TS
- Media and presentation training
- Cooperation with partners to target specific users


Scientific Material
IPCC Assessment
Synthesis Report SPM
Partner Organizations
Policymakers
Other Users